

## **Memo of Procedure:** N95 and Surgical mask reuse

This memo will serve as a guideline for the reuse of N95 and surgical masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Definition:

**Reuse** refers to the practice of using the same N95 respirator and/or surgical mask for multiple encounters with patients but removing it ('doffing') after each encounter. The respirator / mask is stored in between encounters to be put on again ('donned') prior to the next encounter with a patient. Non-emergency reuse has been practiced for decades. CDC recommends that a respirator classified as disposable can be reused by the same worker as long as it remains functional and is used in accordance with local infection control procedures.

### Procedure for N95 mask reuse

- Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures.
- Discard N95 respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- Discard N95 respirators following close contact with any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.
- Use a cleanable face shield (preferred) or a surgical mask over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients, use of engineering controls), when feasible to reduce surface contamination of the respirator.
- Hang used respirators in a designated storage area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so that they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary, for comfort or to maintain fit).
- Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, perform hand hygiene as described above.
- Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal.
- N95 respirators must only be used by a single wearer. Label containers used for storing respirators or label the respirator itself (e.g., on the straps) between uses with the user's name to reduce accidental usage of another person's respirator.

To reduce the chances of decreased protection caused by a loss of respirator functionality, individuals should consult with the respirator manufacturer regarding the maximum number of donning or uses they recommend for the N95 respirator model(s) used in that facility. If no manufacturer guidance is available, preliminary data suggests limiting the number of reuses to no more than five uses per device to ensure an adequate safety margin. Additional Information can be found on the CDC's website at: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html#ref2](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html#ref2)

### Procedure for surgical mask reuse

- Surgical Mask can be used up to one week as long as the following does not occur
  - Becomes wet
  - Visibly soiled
  - Damaged
- Use a cleanable face shield (preferred) when feasible to reduce surface contamination of the surgical mask.
- Hang used surgical masks in a designated storage area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store surgical masks so that they do not touch each other and the person using the surgical masks is clearly identified. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the surgical mask.
- Avoid touching the inside of the surgical mask. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the surgical mask, perform hand hygiene as described above.
- Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a Surgical mask. Discard gloves after the surgical mask is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the surgical mask is sitting comfortably on your face.
- Surgical masks must only be used by a single wearer. Label containers used for storing masks or label the mask itself between uses with the user's name to reduce accidental usage of another person's mask.

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